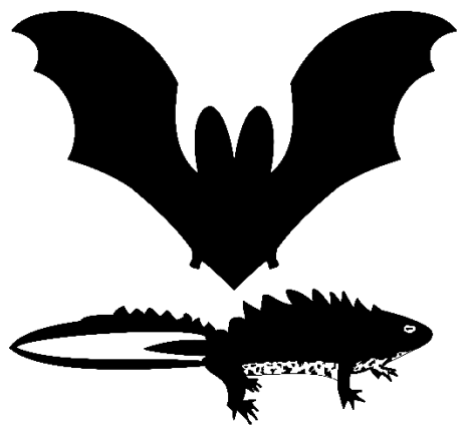




AEWC^{Ltd}

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Reptile Survey Report

Wiltshire's Farm

**Pickhurst Lane
Codmore Hill
Pulborough
RH20 1DA**

Monika Cuskova

**25-105
July 2026**

**AEWC Ltd Birch Walk, Lower Street, Fittleworth, West Sussex, RH20 1JE
Tel: 08452 505585, info@aecwc.co.uk, www.aecwc.co.uk**

Registered in England and Wales No. 06527840

Contents

Summary.....	2
1 Introduction.....	3
2 Method	7
3 Constraints/Limitations	8
4 Results	8
5 Evaluation	12
6 Conclusions & Recommendations.....	12
7 References	14
 FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE SITE LOCATION	4
FIGURE 2: AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE SITE BOUNDARY	4
FIGURE 3: PROPOSED PLANS	5
FIGURE 4: EXTRACT REPTILE MITIGATION GUIDELINES TABLE 7 AND 8	8
FIGURE 5: LOCATIONS OF REPTILE REFUGIA MATS AND AREAS WHERE REPTILES WERE RECORDED DURING THE SURVEY PERIOD	11

Author	Monika Cuskova
Authorised by	Natalie Arscott
Report and version number	25-105-RS-v1
Survey Dates	17/04/2026 – 10/06/2026

Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of their client to undertake a presence / likely absence survey for reptiles at Wiltshire's Farm, Pickhurst Lane, Codmore Hill, Pulborough, RH20 1DA at central grid reference TQ 05321 20722 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out between 17th April and 10th June 2026 by a qualified ecologist Monika Cuskova.
- Suitable habitat for reptiles was identified within the site boundary during a previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Further surveys were therefore required in order to ascertain whether reptiles are present at the site and represent a constraint to the proposed development.
- Reptile surveys were carried out on all areas considered potentially suitable for reptiles. Artificial refugia (sheets of roofing felt) were placed in these areas and checked seven times during suitable weather conditions.
- The survey identified grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) on the site, with a peak count of 3 individuals recorded on a single visit. Grass snakes were found during 5 of the 7 visits.
- **It is recommended that there is a condition for the site to produce a detailed mitigation document and method statement to be submitted to and agreed with the LPA ecologist prior to the development commencing. This document will contain the specific details of the mitigation strategy to be implemented and outline the timetable of events within the method statement.**

This report has been prepared by AEWCLtd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Professional Guidance and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWCLtd were commissioned by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of their client to undertake a presence / likely absence survey for reptiles at Wiltshire's Farm, Pickhurst Lane, Codmore Hill, Pulborough, RH20 1DA to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 The proposed development plan involves the demolition of the agricultural building and construction of a residential property and driveway with associated landscaping.
- 1.3 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out at the site in January and April 2026 identified suitable habitat on-site for reptiles such as slow worms, common lizards and grass snakes. The varied sward grassland, hedgerow and areas of denser ruderal vegetation on site provide suitable habitat for common reptiles to shelter, forage, and commute through. Additionally, a log stack, grass cutting and soil pile, and wood chippings pile could be utilised as refugia.
- 1.4 Further surveys were therefore required to ascertain whether reptiles are present at the site and represent a constraint to the proposed development.
- 1.5 This report details the results of the reptile survey and outlines recommendations in relation to reptiles and the proposed development of the site.

Aims and Objectives

- 1.6 The objectives of the survey were to:
 - Undertake a reptile survey to determine presence / likely absence of reptiles within the proposed development site;
 - Evaluate the conservation importance of the survey area in relation to reptiles;
 - Provide information to inform the impact assessment of development proposals for the area; and
 - Provide information for use in the design and development of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate.

Site Location and Description

- 1.7 The proposed development site is located at Wiltshire's Farm, Pickhurst Lane, Codmore Hill, Pulborough, RH20 1DA at central grid reference TQ 05321 20722. The site is situated in a rural area, approximately 1.5km north of the village of Pulborough. The surrounding landscape predominantly comprises pasture, agricultural land, and blocks of deciduous and ancient woodland. See Figure 1.
- 1.8 The site is approximately 1.23ha and largely comprises grassland and an agricultural building. A hedgerow is located along part of the eastern boundary, with woodland bordering the site to the north and east. See Figure 2.

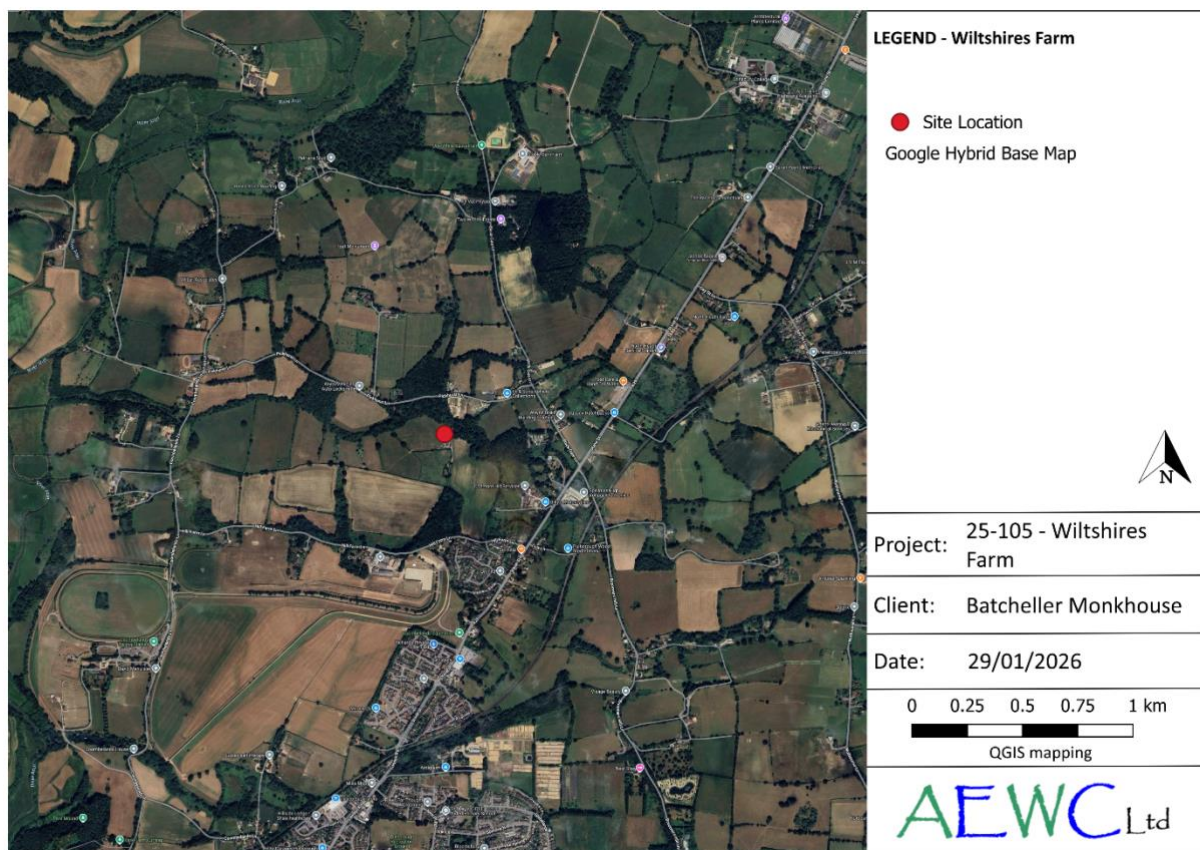


FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE SITE LOCATION



FIGURE 2: AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE SITE BOUNDARY

Proposed Works

- 2.1 The proposed development plan involves the demolition of the agricultural building and construction of a residential property and driveway with associated landscaping as a replacement for the previous permitted scheme. This will involve the removal of ruderal vegetation and an area of grassland. Wildflower meadow planting is proposed as part of the landscaping scheme. The existing access will be retained, enabling the retention of the boundary hedgerow. See Figure 3.

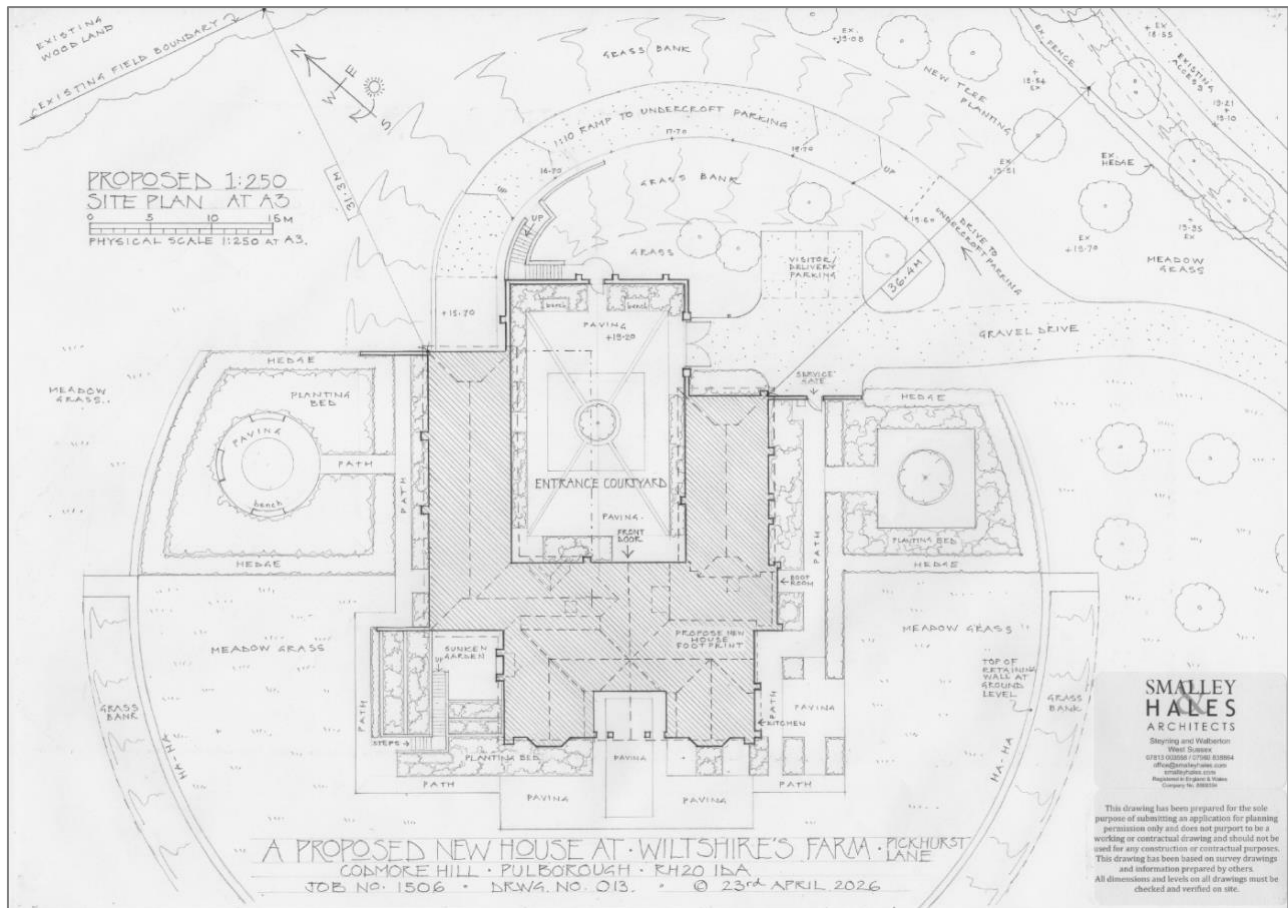


FIGURE 3: PROPOSED PLANS

Legislation

- 1.9 Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*), grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), and adder (*Vipera berus*) are listed under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, in respect of *Section 9(5)* and part of *Section 9(1)*. This protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000*. Under the legislation, it is an offence to:
- intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of these species; or
 - sell or attempt to sell any part of these species either alive or dead.
- 1.10 Smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them full protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the

Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

1.11 All UK reptile species are Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Habitat Requirements

1.12 A general habitat requirement of reptile species is sunny, undisturbed glades and/or slopes, usually in the vicinity of some thick cover (vegetation). Further details of species-specific habitat preference are given below:

Common Lizard

- This species occupies a large range of habitat types. Their home range is usually quite small.
- Open patches to bask in, especially piles of rubble and wood in sunny areas.
- Ground cover of ivy is especially good for lizards for feeding and to avoid predators.
- Dense but short vegetation, open to the sun.

Slow Worm

- Occupies a large range of habitat types.
- Thick ground vegetation – they bask less often than other British reptiles.
- Regularly frequent habitats influenced by man, such as railway cuttings, allotments and gardens.

Grass Snake

- This species has a large home range.
- Grass snakes are highly aquatic and are strongly associated with riparian habitat.
- Compost heaps or dung piles are good egg laying habitat for Grass Snakes.

Adder

- Light chalk or sandy soils are preferred.
- A main requirement is that the area should be undisturbed.
- Heathlands, woodlands rides and chalk down land are good habitat for adders.

Sand Lizard

- Areas of open sand dunes.

- Mature dry heath.

Smooth Snake

- Found almost exclusively in dry heathland, especially in mature stands of heather or gravely lowland heaths.

2 Method

- 2.1 A site visit carried out as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal on the 26th January 2026 by Ivana Murphy and Monika Cuskova of AEWC Ltd, who assessed the site for reptiles, with particular attention paid to those features that provide suitable basking areas (e.g. south-facing slopes), hibernation sites (e.g. banks, walls, piles of rotting vegetation) and opportunities for foraging (e.g. rough grassland and scrub).
- 2.2 A total of 90 artificial refugia sheets were positioned across the site on 30th March 2026. These included sheets of roofing felt a minimum of 0.5m² in area. Sheets were placed in areas of suitable habitat for reptiles throughout the site in likely basking spots (for example, sunny areas near to cover). See Figure 5 for approximate location of refugia.
- 2.3 The sheets were left for at least two weeks to bed in. A total of seven site visits were then made throughout April to June 2026 to record reptiles. The sheets were removed on the last visit.
- 2.4 Where possible, survey visits took place when weather conditions were most suitable for reptile surveying. The most suitable conditions are intermittent or hazy sunshine, low air temperature (10-20°C) and little or no wind (Gent & Gibson, 1998).
- 2.5 Any reptiles seen basking on or sheltering underneath the refugia were noted, and species, sex and age recorded. Time was also spent observing potential basking sites for reptiles on each visit.
- 2.6 Where reptiles are found an estimate of the population size is made.
- 2.7 The surveys were undertaken in April to June 2026 giving survey effort scores of 35 for slow worms, 32 for grass snakes, and 35 for common lizards based on tables 7 and 8 of the Reptile Mitigation Guidelines. These survey effort scores exceed the minimum recommended effort score for all three common species. See Figure 4. The site is considered to be unsuitable for sand lizard, adder, or smooth snake, due to its location and habitat type.

Table 7 Minimum standard effort and recommended methods for presence/absence surveys

Reasonable chance of presence	Method(s)	Minimum standard effort units
Slow-worm	ARS	25
Common lizard	ARS + DOS	30
Sand lizard	DOS#	50
Grass snake	ARS + DOS	30
Adder	ARS + DOS	30
Smooth snake	ARS	50

Key:

* DOS = direct observation survey

ARS = artificial refuge survey

ARS may be used in addition to DOS if sand lizard expected at high density, and refuges laid at density of at least 200/ha

Table 8 Monthly survey effort weighting

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Slow-worm	NR	NR	2	5	5	5	3	2	4	2	NR	NR
Common lizard	NR	2	3	5	5	5	4	3	5	3	NR	NR
Sand lizard	NR	NR	3	5	4	3	2	2	3	NR	NR	NR
Grass snake	NR	NR	3	4	5	5	3	3	4	2	NR	NR
Adder	NR	2	4	5	4	3	2	2	4	1	NR	NR
Smooth snake	NR	NR	3	5	5	4	3	3	4	NR	NR	NR

NR = No survey recommended: whilst surveys done in these months might locate animals, the chance of this is very low and so any such survey visits do not count towards standard effort

FIGURE 4: EXTRACT REPTILE MITIGATION GUIDELINES TABLE 7 AND 8

3 Constraints/Limitations

- 3.1 There were no notable constraints or limitations for the surveys carried out. The surveys were carried out in accordance with best practice guidelines and in suitable conditions only. Full access across the site was possible.

4 Results

- 4.1 The varied sward grassland, hedgerow and areas of denser ruderal vegetation on site provide suitable habitat for common reptiles such as slow worms, common lizards and grass snakes to shelter, forage, and commute through. Additionally, a log stack, grass cutting and soil pile, and wood chippings pile were recorded within and near the boundaries, which could be utilised as refugia. The habitats present on site are considered unsuitable for adder, smooth snake and sand lizard. A full habitat suitability assessment is provided in Table 1.



Photograph 1 – Varied sward grassland on site.



Photograph 2 – Ruderal vegetation on site.



Photograph 3 – Stack of logs at the eastern boundary,



Photograph 4 – Wood chipping pile off-site close to the southwestern corner.

Table 1: Habitat Suitability Assessment

Reptile Habitat Characters	Site Assessment	Notes
Location in relation to species range	Good	Within range for all common species of reptiles.
Vegetation structure	Moderate	Boundary hedgerow, areas of varied sward grassland, and denser ruderal vegetation provide good habitat for reptiles to shelter, forage, and commute through. The short sward grassland in the western portion of the site was considered sub-optimal.
Insolation (sun exposure)	Good	The field margins are shaded at certain times of day due to the presence of hedgerow and mature trees; however, the site otherwise receives good sun exposure.

Reptile Habitat Characters	Site Assessment	Notes
Aspect	Poor	The site is relatively level with no major bias towards or away from the sun.
Topography	Poor	The site is largely flat with the lack of pronounced banks or mounds.
Surface geology	Poor	Clay soil provides potential for burrowing but is not optimal.
Connectivity to nearby good quality habitat;	Good	The site is surrounded by and directly connected to rural land with suitability for reptiles.
Prey abundance	Good	The habitats onsite are suitable to support prey species.
Refuge opportunity	Good	Hedgerows, longer sward grassland, dense ruderal vegetation, and log stack, wood chippings and soil pile provide a range of refuge opportunities.
Hibernation habitat potential	Moderate	Hedgerow may support hibernating reptiles.
Disturbance	Good	The site is currently not grazed and maintained irregularly.
Egg-laying site potential (grass snake and sand lizard only).	Poor	No obviously suitable egg-laying features such as compost heaps have been identified.

4.2 Table 2 shows the weather conditions recorded at the site during the surveys.

Table 2: Weather conditions during the reptile survey

Visit	Date	Time		Weather	Temp °C		Cloud cover (%)	Wind (BF scale)
		Start	Finish		Start	Finish		
1	17/04/2026	12:15	13:45	Mostly clear, warm and sunny with gentle breeze	15	15	20	3
2	23/04/2026	09:00	10:30	Clear, warm, and sunny with gentle breeze	15	16	0	3
3	29/04/2026	11:00	12:15	Sunny, warm, and dry with moderate breeze	18	18	0	4
4	08/05/2026	13:45	15:00	Sunny and warm, with low cloud cover and light air	18	18	30	1
5	15/05/2026	11:00	12:15	Partly cloudy with intermittent sun and gentle breeze	12	12	60	3
6	22/05/2026	07:45	09:00	Warm and sunny with light breeze and clear skies	17	19	0	2
7	10/06/2026	09:00	10:00	Mostly cloudy with intermittent sun	14	16	70	2

- 4.3 A single species of reptile was identified during the surveys: this being a grass snake. Table 3 details the results of the survey and maximum counts on each survey visit, this indicates the minimum number of reptiles on the site and can be used to give an estimate of population size where sufficient effort units have been reached.

Table 3: Results of the reptile surveys.

Visit	Slow worm					Common Lizard					Grass Snake				
	Adult		Sub		Juv	Adult		Sub		Juv	Adult		Sub		Juv
	♂	♀	♂	♀		♂	♀	♂	♀		♂	♀	♂	♀	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

(♂=Male, ♀=Female, Sub = Sub adult, Juv=Juvenile)

- 4.4 Grass snakes were found during 5 of the 7 visits, with a peak count of 3 adults on the second visit. All grass snakes were recorded in the northern and eastern boundaries, as well as near the barn. The grass snakes were found on the edge of the woodland and near the off-site wood chipping pile. See Figure 5.

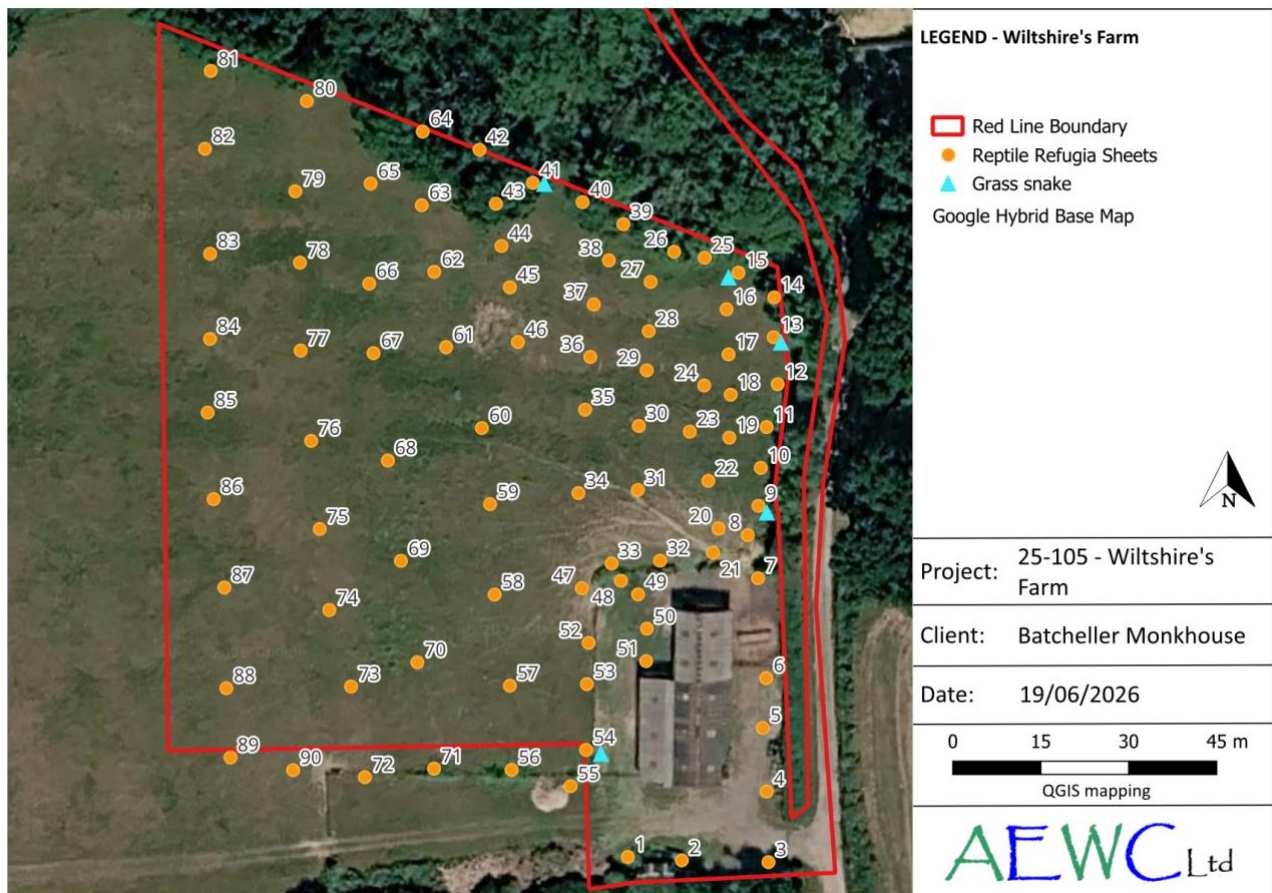


FIGURE 5: LOCATIONS OF REPTILE REFUGIA MATS AND AREAS WHERE REPTILES WERE RECORDED DURING THE SURVEY PERIOD

5 Evaluation

- 5.1 The seven survey visits identified a peak count of 3 adult grass snakes present using the site, found on the northern boundary.

Table 4: Reptile Population Class Estimates.

Species	Population Size Class		
	Low	Medium	Large
Adder	<5	5-10	>10
Grass Snake	<5	5-10	>10
Common Lizard	<5	5-20	>20
Slow worm	<10	10-40	>40

Figures in the table refer to maximum number of adults seen by observation and/or under tins (placed at a density of up to 100 per hectare of suitable habitat), by one person in one day.

- 5.2 Using the population size class estimates from the Reptile Mitigation Guidelines (Natural England, 2011), see Table 4, the peak number of 3 grass snakes recorded at the site would indicate that there is a low population present.
- 5.3 With the exception of one record, all grass snakes were recorded along the site boundaries, particularly in association with the woodland edge that contains a drain. These habitats are considered likely to provide the principal areas of suitability for grass snake within the site, offering a connected corridor of vegetation for commuting, sheltering and foraging.
- 5.4 The survey results indicate that the more open areas of the site are likely not used by grass snake.
- 5.5 The site and surrounding area are not considered to contain suitable habitat to support adder, sand lizard, or smooth snake. The site would be suitable for common lizard and slow worm; however, the minimum recommended survey effort units were exceeded, refugia sheets were distributed at a thorough density, and checks were undertaken in suitable conditions, and no individuals of these species were encountered. As such, it is considered that common lizards and slow worms are likely absent from the site, or present at very low densities or on occasion only.

6 Conclusions & Recommendations

- 6.1 The surveys across the site have identified a low population of grass snakes, all except one, found along the northern and eastern boundaries.
- 6.2 A lack of any mitigation could result in a negative impact on this species through potential death. Two possible mitigation options exist for reptiles:

- **In-situ mitigation**, which requires a suitable quantity and quality of habitat to be retained or provided within the proposed development site so as to enable the persistence of viable populations of reptile species. This is the preferred approach as it offers the advantage of conserving populations on a site where the habitat is known to be suitable and minimising the level of disturbance to reptiles.
 - **Ex-situ mitigation**, which is required when there is insufficient space or scope for on-site conservation requires suitable receptor sites. Reptiles will need to be translocated to these off-site receptor sites, taking fully into account good practice guidelines and recommendations. Habitat enhancement may be required prior to translocation, and subsequent monitoring should be practiced in order to establish whether or not the translocation has been successful.
- 6.3 Where feasible, in-situ mitigation is the preferred and least disruptive method. Given the identification of a low population of grass snake primarily along the northern and eastern boundaries, and this species' known large home range, it is likely that this species also utilises off-site habitats in the wider landscape. Given this, and the fact that the proposed development will not involve clearance of these boundary areas, it is considered that translocation is not required and would result in unnecessary disruption and stress to any reptiles present.
- 6.4 The proposed development will not impact the off-site woodland with the boundary hedgerow retained, which can be managed to remain suitable for reptiles. The proposed development will also include the creation of a new hedgerow at the east of the site, and enhancement of grassland outside of the private curtilage as well as tree planting and retention of the grassland in the northeast of the site. These retained and proposed habitats will provide a connected network of suitable habitat for grass snake and maintain connectivity with adjacent fields to the east and west.
- 6.5 **As such, it is considered that in-situ mitigation will be possible, with strict measures adopted during clearance to protect reptiles from harm. All clearance work must be undertaken under ecological supervision in suitable conditions for reptiles to be active, and any reptiles found are to be moved to boundary habitats that are to be unimpacted. It will be necessary to adopt an approach of phased, controlled vegetation clearance with habitat manipulation, to encourage any reptiles to move into suitable retained habitat on-site (such as the northern boundary).**
- 6.6 **It is recommended that there is a condition for the site to produce a detailed mitigation document and method statement to be submitted to and agreed with the LPA ecologist prior to the development commencing.** This mitigation document will contain the specific details of the mitigation strategy to be implemented and outline the timetable of events within the method statement. Some enhancements for reptiles should be implemented into any mitigation document such as suitable habitat management and creation of hibernacula

References

CIEEM (2013) *Competencies for Species Survey Guidance Documents*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2021) *Good Practice Guidance for Habitats and Species*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2022) *Code of Professional Conduct*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

English Nature (2004) *Reptiles: Guidelines for Developers*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Froglife (1999) *Reptile Survey: an Introduction to Planning, Conducting and Interpreting Surveys for Snake and Lizard Conservation*. Froglife Advice Sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth.

Gent, T. & Gibson, S. (eds) (1998) *Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (2nd edition)*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (1998) *Evaluating Local Mitigation/Translocation Programmes: Maintaining Best Practice and Lawful Standards*. HGBI Advisory Notes for Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARGs). HGBI, c/o Froglife, Halesworth. Unpublished.

Natural England (2011) *Reptile Mitigation Guidelines: Technical Information Note TIN102*. Natural England, Peterborough.

Natural England (2023) *Licensing protected species: survey, mitigation and licensing guidance*. Natural England, London. Available at: GOV.UK.

Natural England (2025) *Reptiles: advice for making planning decisions*. Natural England, London. Available at: GOV.UK.